

I am writing to protest Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air what the print press is describing as an inaccurate, distorted and emotionally-charged documentary about John Kerry and the Vietnam war. Its only aim is to smear Kerry days before the election and drive impressionable voters in battleground states to vote for George W. Bush. This is an intolerable interference in the electoral process by a corporate media giant whose zeal in behalf of getting George W. Bush re-elected is well known. It almost certainly violates the 60-day rule. And it shows what kind of abuse we can expect to get when media consolidation is allowed free reign.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get less of what we need for our democracy, and more of what's good for the bottom line -- as well as, in cases like Sinclair's, the ability and great temptation to misuse those airwaves to advance their own political agenda, with seemingly little risk to themselves or their licenses.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.